

FACULTY SENATE COMMUNICATIONS REPORT | 5 May 2016 meeting

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OVERVIEW

The 2015-16 Faculty Senate held its sixteenth regular meeting on 5 May 2016, from 3:45 to approximately 6:00 pm in the Riggle Room of ADUC. Although there were several pieces of regular business on the agenda (which will be recapped first), the President's latest budget update, including the first specifics on reduction strategies plus the survey presented to tenured and tenure-track faculty, was received in the middle of this meeting, at which point it became the dominant subject. In an attempt to provide some sort of formal Senate response, the meeting was extended past the regular end time; however, due largely to the impending College of Science awards banquet at 6:00 pm that evening, a quorum was lost before all of the desired business could be completed. Subsequently, Chair Adams called a special additional Senate meeting for Tuesday, 10 May at 1:00 pm (i.e., in the open final exam block for that day) at which the issue of the planned and proposed personnel reductions is planned to be addressed further.

IMPORTANT PROGRAMMING NOTE

The Board of Regents (BoR) will hold a work session this Friday, 13 May 2016 (the day before commencement), beginning at 8:30 am in room 102D of the CHER building. Although this is not a voting, business meeting, the President is expected to present his initial budget framework to the Regents, and other items of interest (e.g., PAC-26) may be up for discussion. Both Faculty Regent Berglee and Chair Adams are encouraging all faculty members who are able to attend this important event. For those unable to attend, the Executive Council will be live-tweeting the event via the new MSU Faculty Senate Twitter account (follow @MSUFaculty). Please also note, once again, that the next quarterly business meeting of the BoR will be on 10 June 2016, at which time the 2016-17 operating budget, and possibly other items, are expected to receive formal approval.

TECHNOLOGY ADVISOR BOARD UPDATE [From TAB rep Senator Kim Sharp]

ITV: The efforts to replace ITV continue, although it will largely remain in place through the next academic year. A new replacement technology, described as being similar to Blackboard Collaborate, is being considered and will be piloted in a few select classes this fall. It is not known which classes will be selected for the pilot runs, but a complete switchover to the new technology seems to be intended for the 2017-18 academic year.

MAP computer replacements: Funds for the MAP will now be distributed at the College level; CFO Beth Patrick will develop a budget and distribute available MAP funds to the College Deans. Replacements are now intended to occur on a five-year cycle, beginning with the oldest existing machines. There will apparently be six different systems, both PCs (Dell) and Macs available, although it sounds as though there will be more effort made to match machine choice with projected usage rather than everyone being free to pick whichever machine they like.

Telephone: The next phase of the "Much More Connected" project will be a complete replacement of the campus telephone system, to occur over the summer. The new system will be fiber optic, and the phones themselves will have enhanced capabilities (e.g., conference calling). Senator Sharp pressed Steve Richmond for details, finding out that the price tag for the initial upgrade work is approximately \$400K. In addition, the running of this new system will be outsourced to Cincinnati Bell at a rate of \$400K per annum, compared with approximately \$310K per annum for the current, internally-managed system.

MISCELLANEOUS RECURRING BUSINESS

Retention: In response to the discussion of retention at the 21 April Senate meeting, Chair Adams has contacted Dr. John Ernst for more information on the oft-mentioned "best practices" for student retention. She received a collegial response from Dr. Ernst, and expects to receive the requested information from him soon.

Budget information: Chair Adams reminded Senators of the budget details presented by President Andrews at his recent campus fora. This information is available via MyMoreheadState, and Chair Adams has also posted it to the Faculty Senate Blackboard shell for more convenient access.

Governance do-over: While the bulk of the Governance slate was approved at the previous Senate meeting, it was necessary to revisit two spots that proved problematic. Specifically, these were spots on the university Promotion and Research and Creative Productions standing committees. The RCP appointment was approved without incident; a slight change was made for the Promotion appointment, with Dr. Mee-Ryoung Shon being substituted for Dr. Jody Fernandez, due to Dr. Shon's status as a full Professor, which is preferred for the Promotion committee.

PROVOST REPORT

The Provost delivered a brief report, and fielded some questions from Senators. Of note, the Provost thanked Chair Adams for her service as Senate Chair, and complimented her for her work. Please also note that the Provost was present and contributed throughout the meeting outside of just his specific report.

Administrative search updates: Candidates for the College of Science Dean position either have been or will be visiting campus. The first two candidates interviewed on 4-5 May and 5-6 May, while the third will interview on 9-10 May. Three finalists have also been selected for the Vice President for Student Success position. These candidates are planned to visit campus in the weeks immediately following commencement. On this front, Senator Rus May expressed to the Provost his displeasure with the fact that these administrative hires are still being made in the face of the current budget crisis.

Termination procedures: In light of the planned and proposed position eliminations at MSU, the Provost was asked whether terminated individuals, particularly tenured and tenure-track faculty, will receive an additional year of employment once notified. The Provost stated that the administration intends to follow all PACs and other personnel policies currently in place. He further stated that, at least in his understanding, the President intends to give any faculty members whose lines are eliminated the additional year of terminal employment.

Athletics: Senator Tim Hare expressed to the Provost his displeasure with the news on athletics received last week, given that there will essentially be no net reductions in sports (both tennis programs are being suspended, but women's indoor track and field and beach volleyball are being added). The Provost responded that Title IX compliance is at least partly at issue here, motivating the net addition of one women's sport. Senator Sharp noted the unfortunate coincidence of the women's tennis team receiving the Team Academic Award for highest GPA at the Athletics Honors Banquet just a day before their program was suspended. There was also some further discussion of the recent NCAA sanctioning of the men's basketball program for academic issues, which the Provost attempted to defuse by explaining that the sanctions largely stemmed from problems with transfer credits, not anything that happened in MSU courses.

PRESIDENTIAL BUDGET ANNOUNCEMENT

Announcement summary: As mentioned above, the President's email announcement was received while this Senate meeting was in progress. The announcement included an overview of the total budget deficit faced by MSU for the 2016-17 fiscal year (FY), which stands at \$9,708,088. This total includes a projected \$4,382,578 decline in tuition revenue, the \$1,950,300 (4.5%) state appropriation cut, and numerous cost increases in areas such as health benefits, KERS contributions, and debt service (for "Campus Technology and Security Improvements").

In response to this massive shortfall, the administration has already settled on strategies totaling \$8,504,185 in savings, to include a 5.33% tuition hike (\$2,919,751), increased Auxiliary Services revenue (\$1,352,493, primarily from increased student housing rates), an additional amount of "new student program fees in targeted disciplines" (\$627,780), unspecified "operating budget reductions" (\$718,594), and, most dramatically, the elimination of 64 personnel positions (\$2,885,567). The 64 includes 30 currently occupied staff and instructor positions plus 34 vacant staff, instructor, and tenured/tenure-track faculty lines that will not be filled. Even with these strategies a deficit of approximately \$1.2 million is still left, which the President proposes to address either through the elimination of 13 currently occupied tenured/tenure-track faculty lines or by imposing a recurring approximate 5% salary reduction among all tenured/tenure-track faculty. Faculty line elimination is proposed to be "informed by the 2014-15 Academic Self Study" and would occur in programs that were previously targeted to be "sunset or modified" and/or "have experienced significant enrollment declines."

At the end of the President's email, all tenured/tenure-track faculty were invited to participate in a survey, set up by Institutional Research, in which they could express their preference for either option "A" (eliminating the "estimated" 13 tenured/tenure-track lines) or option "B" (implementing the "approximate" 5% salary reduction). The prospect of such a survey was discussed among the President and Executive Council at their 2 May 2016 meeting; the Executive Council

considered it a positive measure to ask for faculty input, but was not told that these would be the options presented. After the Senate meeting, it became apparent that this particular email was only directly received by tenured and tenure-track faculty members, with employees in other categories receiving slightly different versions that did not include any mention of the survey.

Initial responses from Senators: Senator Tim Hare immediately offered up a strong condemnation of the President's announcement. He called for an immediate vote of no-confidence in the President, to be presented for participation by the entire MSU faculty. As part of his condemnation, he stated that he feels this action is warranted by, among additional things, a historical pattern of flat instructional spending while other areas of the budget have increased. Senator Hare further expressed a sense of urgency, stating that these actions must be stopped before they "destroy the institution." Senator Rus May concurred with Senator Hare on the need for an immediate no-confidence vote, and also described the presentation of the "A" and "B" options as the only options as "absurd." Senator May made a formal motion to initiate a no-confidence vote, which was seconded, but please note that it was ultimately tabled later in the meeting without any further action being taken.

The issue of no-confidence proved to be somewhat divisive, with many Senators expressing the general sentiment that, while they are sympathetic to the arguments in favor, it may not be the right move at this particular juncture. Faculty Regent Berglee was among those expressing this sentiment. He further stated that, from his viewpoint, the censure vote of 7 April has been effective and is still sinking in with the BoR; the other Regents were apparently somewhat taken aback by that occurrence. He once again expressed his apprehension about "pushing the button" on no-confidence. In response to this line of reasoning, others stated that the severe, unprecedented impacts planned and proposed for the MSU faculty are the equivalent of having the "nuclear option" exercised against us.

Another major sentiment in opposition to no-confidence was best stated by Senator Eric Jerde, who expressed his concern that taking such an action at this time would be an overly emotional, knee-jerk reaction. Similar concerns were raised when no-confidence was called for earlier this term in the wake of the original furlough announcement. The rebuttal to this has generally been that a vote of no-confidence would be based on a long-standing historical pattern of grievances, with the current crisis being only its latest and most dramatic manifestation. As an additional example of that pattern, Senator Hare mentioned that, in addition to those included in the current budget plan, many faculty positions have already been lost to attrition in recent years.

Points of clarification (part I): During the discussion among Senators, several points related to the budget announcement were raised and clarified. To begin with, given the proposal to eliminate tenured and tenure-track faculty members, it seemed important to clarify the current personnel policies on this front. The in-force PAc-26 states that, outside of disciplinary action, the laying off of tenured faculty requires either outright program elimination or a formal declaration of "financial exigency" by the university. Furthermore, the in-force PAc-26 lays out a "priority order" for how faculty members can be eliminated, which begins with instructors and progresses through tenure-track, then tenured, faculty according to seniority.

It should be noted, however, that the ongoing revision of PAc 22 and 26, a major component of Senate business for much of this academic year, is still unsettled. Regent Berglee informed the Senate at this meeting that his BoR subcommittee has completed its evaluation of PAc-26 (this being the reconciled draft, Senate-approved and signed off on by the President, which is essentially the current PAc-26 minus everything about disciplinary actions/removal for cause, now in the new PAc-22). The BoR subcommittee did not undertake any "recommendations, votes, or conclusions," and the PAc-26 draft will now "go back to BoR Chair Goodpaster for further action." Regent Berglee stated that he made every effort during the meetings of this subcommittee to express the views of the Senate and faculty writ large on PAc-26, and to explain the potential ramifications of altering this PAc. At the moment, it remains unclear how this situation will play out, although Regent Berglee believes PAc-26 may be a topic of discussion at the 13 May BoR work session mentioned above.

Points of clarification (part II): The 5% salary reduction referenced in the President's email will apply only to tenured/tenure-track faculty members; administrators will not be included, at least under the current proposal. According to the Provost, the rationale for targeting only those faculty members is that other areas of the budget have already been slashed as far as they possibly can be, with tenured/tenure-track faculty being the last unaffected bastion. He described this as a course of last resort. He was asked several questions about whether any consideration had been given to eliminating positions or cutting pay for administrators, and was pressed for more details about where precisely the 13 faculty positions to be eliminated would come from. The Provost was unable to answer these questions, but seemed to take note of the fact that including administrators in the 5% salary reduction might generate more of a sense that we are "all in this together."

As to the nature of the salary reduction itself, if implemented, it will be a 5% reduction from one's current base salary. It is recurring in the sense that the 5%-reduced salary will essentially become one's new base salary, presumably until the university

finds itself in better financial shape, and not in the sense that each year would see an additional 5% reduction. In addition, if this option were selected, for the 2016-17 FY it will be on top of the one-time non-recurring 2.6% reduction already implemented as the faculty version of the furlough. This means tenured/tenure-track faculty would experience an approximate 7.6% salary cut in the first year. On this front, the Provost confirmed the fact, with the caveat “if it goes through,” in reference to the ongoing court battle over the constitutionality of Governor Bevin’s executive order instituting a 2% state appropriation cut for the 2015-16 FY (which prompted the furlough in the first place). That being said, even if the executive order were ultimately ruled unconstitutional, it would not happen for quite some time, as the legal battle is expected to be protracted.

Points of clarification (part III): Several Senators expressed a desire for clarification regarding precisely what types of employees are included in the “staff” category mentioned in the President’s announcement. Specifically, the issue is “professional versus non-professional,” as upper administrators (e.g., the President, the Provost, other Vice Presidents, etc.) are counted as “professional staff.” The Provost was not able to divulge any details on this point. Furthermore, Senators expressed concern that this is not the only area in which the President’s announcement did not provide sufficient details, particularly given the magnitude of the decision tenured/tenure-track faculty are being faced with in the survey. As an example, the question was asked of what other strategies exist within the “feasible but avoid if possible” category referenced in the email. The President stated this move to either eliminate 13 positions or impose the 5% pay cut was one of 14 options included in that category, but made no mention of the other items on that list.

Actions: As the meeting was clearly winding down, due largely to the aforementioned College of Science awards banquet, Senator Elizabeth McLaren proposed a two-part resolution aimed at addressing the concerns outlined in the previous section. The first part, which was passed, formally asked the administration to provide clarification about the balance of “professional versus non-professional” within the “staff” category used in the budget announcement. The second part was intended to either call for a new option in the survey or express the sense of the Senate that insufficient information has been provided upon which to base such a decision. Quorum was lost before that second part could be finalized and voted upon.

As a follow-up, the day after this Senate meeting, Chair Adams received a response regarding the breakdown of staff categories. Apparently, 8 of 17 vacant positions and 11 of 25 filled positions being eliminated are in the “professional” category. This adds up to 19 out of the 42 total staff positions being eliminated in the “professional” category.